

## **Chairman's Annual Report 2024-2025**

This last year has been mostly dominated by the long-awaited traffic calming for the main A418 through the village. Whilst not everyone agrees that it is an improvement, it is hoped that it will encourage through traffic, especially HGVs, away from the village via the Strategic Link Roads of Bellingham Way and Mike Griffin Way on Kingsbrook.

The new refurbished Children's Playground at the Recreation Ground was officially opened in early May by John Brown, Chairman of the Mike & Claire Griffin Trust who provided the largest part of the funding for this £100,000+ project. The remainder of the funding came from Wendover Community Board, Gib Lane Community Fund and Berton Parish Council.

The refurbishment of the Jubilee Hall took place in the Summer of 2024 – providing new kitchen, toilets, electrics, insulated ceiling, re-decoration, blackout blinds and soundproofing panels. Again this £84,000+ project was mainly funded by the Mike & Claire Griffin Trust with contributions from Wendover Community Board and Berton Parish Council.

Tony Ellis has been co-opted onto the Board of Trustees for the Jubilee Hall. Tony was born in the village and went to school here, played football for Berton FC and now runs a very successful garage business at Burcott Lodge Farm. Therefore it was felt he was a suitable addition to the Trustees.

In August we undertook to upgrade Muddy Lane to give an improved access to Berton School and Kingsbrook for children and adults alike. The Railway Path on Kingsbrook also opened in time for the start of the new school year, giving easy access to Kingsbrook Secondary School, where many Berton children now attend.

On the planning front, we currently have two controversial planning applications awaiting determination by Buckinghamshire Council. 115 houses and a sports field off Gib Lane and 47 houses south of the A418. We have welcomed the support of residents in submitting their objections to both of these, with the help of the Action Group too. We await the outcome of both these particularly in view of the government's housing targets.

We have supported the provision of a second primary school on Kingsbrook but have objections to the provision of a cycleway/footpath from Kingsbrook onto the dangerous bend by Marshalls Lea which we feel would be very dangerous.

The Neighbourhood Plan has taken a big step forward and been approved by the Independent Examiner to be suitable for Referendum, subject to a few amendments which the Steering Group are currently working on. It is hoped the Plan will go to Referendum before the end of 2025.

A group of residents carried out bulb planting and other environmental work at St Osyth's Well earlier this year, with assistance from the Chiltern Society. Other work and improvements may be made in the coming year.

The Events Group organised a Village Quiz and Bierton Run again this year, raising funds for the North Bucks Down's Syndrome Group. A Halloween film event was also a great success. The Santa Float was unfortunately cancelled due to bad weather forecast. Thanks to all members of the Events Group for organising and running these events.

A Pop Up Pub was organised by a group of residents in September and was such a resounding success that a further one was held at Christmas and two more are planned for 2025.

The weekly Social Hub continues to flourish and we have Steve Knowles and his helpers to thank for this.

We received the news recently that the ELR South is to be provided within the Woodlands development and should be operational in 2028, maybe sooner.

Meetings have been attended with outside organisations such as Wendover Community Board, Barratts Stakeholders, Highways Team, Parish Forums and Kingsbrook Parish Council.

Plans for the forthcoming year include the refurbishment of the bus shelter and memorial bench close to Gib Lane and the re-roofing of the Old Cricket Pavilion at the Recreation Ground.

I would like to thank all my Councillors for their help and support with everything throughout the year. They each have their own areas of interest and knowledge and it is good to share tasks around.

I could not present this report without thanking our dedicated, efficient Parish Clerk, Wendy Tomlinson, who has continued to provide a first class service to the Parish Council - keeping us all informed and on our toes! It is particularly commendable that she is doing all this whilst spending half the week in Woking where her daughter attends a theatrical college.

I'd like to finish this year's report by thanking our three retiring Buckinghamshire Councillors for their support over the past 5 years – Julie Ward, Mike Collins and Bill Chapple. Julie, in particular who lives in the village and is familiar with everything and has been on hand when problems have arisen. Bill is retiring at the end of his term and has supported us for a number of years. We wish him well and hope he doesn't get too bored!! Mike is continuing with his Aston Clinton area.

This Parish Council's term of office comes to an end in a few weeks' time. Two councillors have decided not to stand again – Nigel Hyre and Andrew Brierley. We thank

them both for their contributions over the years. Nominations have been received for the next four years and I am pleased to say that 6 of us have decided to stand again. Lesley Harridge and Sarah Kennedy will be joining us in May. All were uncontested and therefore automatically accepted. This does leave us with one vacancy so if anyone would be interested in joining us, please contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone of the elections for our Unitary Council which take place on 1 May. Please use your vote wisely. Our ward has changed and now comprises Wing, Bierton & Kingsbrook (plus surrounding villages). You can vote for up to 2 candidates for this ward. There are 11 candidates so you have plenty to choose from.

I could not finish without thanking the residents who have supported me over the year. I know you have not always agreed with me or the decisions that have been made but I can assure you they have all been done with the best intentions for those living here.

Thank you

Sheila Cotton